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Nation

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In Memoriam

Bill C-262

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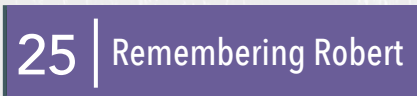
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The will of the people

by Will Nicholls



Though it's hard to see the trees for the forest as they say, a few trees stand out, such as the positive response of football fans to being welcomed to unceded Algonquin territory during opening ceremonies of the Grey Cup game November 26.

There's also Prime Minister Trudeau's apology to residential school survivors in Newfoundland and Labrador, the settlement for victims of the Sixties Scoop and the potential implementation of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Then reality comes along to clear your mind. Despite all the positive vibes that fuel hope, when one looks at the ways governments actually work, what can happen and what will happen may be two different things. The difference between politicians and bureaucrats has an effect on what happens within Canada.

To think that elected politicians decide what the government should do and bureaucrats rush to implement them is too wonderful to really happen.

We would all like to believe that this is the way our government works.

The truth is elected public officials are more likely to be engaged in getting re-elected. Appointed bureaucrats, however, only need to please public officials who are responsible for their appointment for a four-year period. Politicians come and go while bureaucrats are around as long as they wish in most cases. This implies that while elected politicians pursue policies that appeal to the general public, bureaucrats are more influenced by special interests, political elites, possible corporate careers as well as other motivations. With the appearance of competency, a high-level bureaucrat can influence the policy environment in many ways.

Of course, this is done with care. Policy changes can affect budgets and neither a politician nor bureaucrat wants to see their funding cut. But reality and logic show that bureaucrats can be unaccountable. They are less polarized than party-affiliated politicians, but are not removed from their posts willy

nilly when power changes hands after an election.

This can lead to problems. The bureaucracy for the most part ignores small interest groups (more than just First Nations). For instance, why does a political decision to compensate the victims of the Sixties Scoop encounter difficulties? The politicians made a decision. The bureaucrats made a decision and that was only to compensate the people who could prove they were scooped, even though records of this time are problematic at best.

The cheers of the football fans in Ottawa were loud but unlikely heard by those on the Hill. And will the UN Declaration ever really be implemented? Well, it took almost 42 years to see most of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement implemented.

The main difference between top-level politicians and top-level bureaucrats lies in how they are held accountable. A lack of accountability means the will of the people can be delayed or even thwarted.



Liberals flip back

by Ben Powless | Photo provided by Chairs & Tables

Trudeau government support for Bill C-262 is not yet a time for celebration

Appause and surprise met Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould's announcement that the Trudeau Liberals would move to support bill C-262 – a private member's bill sponsored by Romeo Saganash, the NDP MP for Abitibi-Baie-James-Nunavik-Eeyou.

Tabled in the House of Commons in April 2016, Bill C-262 calls for Canadian law to be in "harmony" with United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). More specifically, it affirms all 46 articles of UNDRIP while ensuring "nothing [will be] construed so as to diminish or extinguish existing aboriginal or treaty rights... recognized and affirmed in Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982."

The announcement was made November 20 at a symposium in Gatineau, hosted by the Coalition for the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples, to celebrate the 10th anniversary of UNDRIP.

Additionally, the bill requires the federal government to develop an "action plan to achieve the objectives of the UNDRIP" in partnership with First Nations.

A year-and-a-half earlier, at the Assembly of First Nations' Annual General Assembly, Minister Wilson-

Raybould had called the UNDRIP "unworkable" in Canadian law and appeared to be managing the expectations of First Nations' leadership. That was shortly after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's 2015 election campaign promise to implement UNDRIP.

Some have gone so far as to label the position as an "about-face" by the Liberals. However, Paul Joffe, lawyer and legal scholar for the Grand Council of the Crees, was less severe in his assessment.

"I'm giving the Minister and the Liberals the benefit of the doubt. If you take the time and look at what Minister Wilson-Raybould said in the summer of 2016, it doesn't appear to me that she was saying it was unworkable, but that it wasn't something that would be done all at once," Joffe told *the Nation*.

"This government has shown that it's willing to work with Indigenous Peoples and move from colonialism to contemporary standards outlined in UNDRIP," Joffe added. "If the Conservatives were to win the next election, they have made it clear that they have no use for the Declaration."

Joffe was quick to point out that the Harper government defeated a similar bill put forward by Saganash in 2013. He insisted that this was a great opportunity, not only for the Indigenous

Peoples of Canada but the Indigenous Peoples of the world.

"It's one thing to talk about the Declaration in public, it's another thing entirely to say, 'On behalf of the Trudeau government – on behalf of Canada – we support Romeo Saganash's Bill C-262 on the UN Declaration,'" said Joffe. "It says something important to the rest of Canada and also establishes tremendous precedent for Indigenous Peoples across the globe."

There's still a long road for this bill before it becomes law. C-262 is in its second of three readings. If the Liberals follow through on their non-binding statement, the bill will be sent to its third reading in parliamentary committee. There, its contents will be examined and amendments could be made before it makes to its third reading. After that, it must go through the same process in the Senate, where it may be amended. Both chambers must adopt the same version of the bill before it can receive Royal Assent.

"The bill could be improved in parliamentary committee, hopefully it wouldn't be reduced," said Joffe. "It's important for Indigenous people to be involved, and to be vigilant and hold the government to account to ensure what's get through is a significant change to Canada."

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The entire Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton team wishes you a lovely holiday season and all the best in the new year!

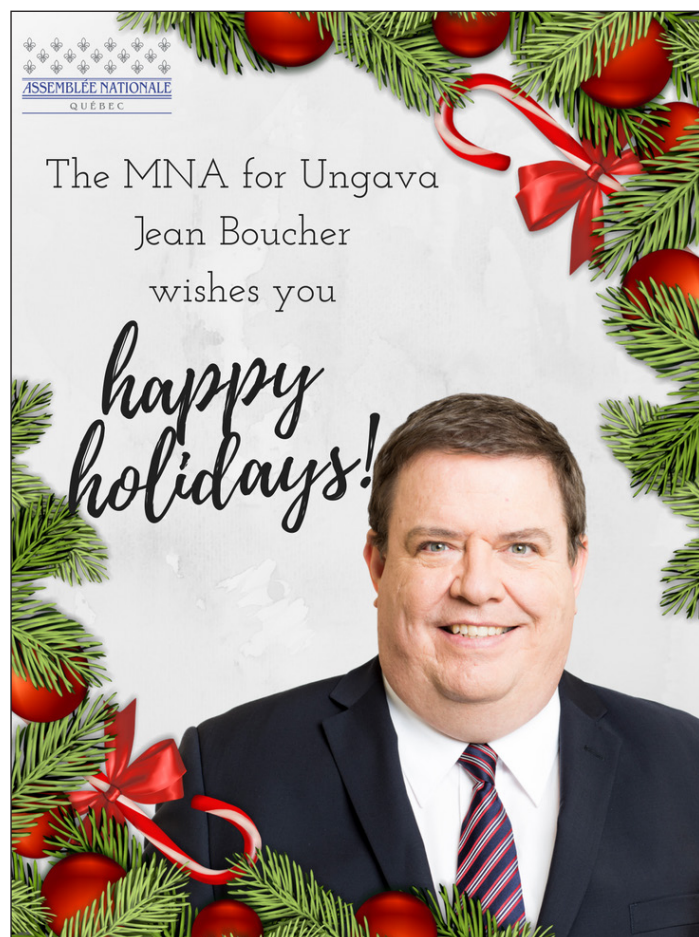
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Sharing the wealth

Abitibi-Témiscamingue First Nations fight for fair compensation from mining companies

by Joshua Grant
Photo by Luc Vincent-Savard, CDEPNQL

Protesters targeted the annual Quebec Mines conference with the message that exploration or exploitation on ancestral Anishnabe territory will no longer happen without their consent.

Members of Anishnabeg First Nations, including Abitibiwinni Chief David Kistabish and Vice-Chief of Lac-Simon Pamela Papatie, gathered in front of Quebec City's Centre des congrès November 21 to take a stand against the way mining development is handled on their territory.

"We're protesting because we want to negotiate impact and benefit agreements (IBAs) with the many mines in the region," Kistabish said. "There are certain companies, Canadian Malartic among others, who aren't taking us seriously."

Kistabish vowed that until Quebec and prospective mining companies negotiate an agreement with the First Nations in the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region, there will be no more mines.

The Canadian Malartic mine is of particular concern to Kistabish and the Abitibiwinni First Nation (located in Pikogan), as well as to the nearby communities of Lac Simon, Kitcisakik and Winneway. Canadian Malartic recently announced the approval of their plan to divert Highway 117 and expand their open-pit gold mine that sits 25 kilometres west of Val-d'Or.

"They never consulted with the First Nations here, Lac-Simon or Pikogan," he said. "I can only really speak for Pikogan because that's who I represent, but neither the mining company or the government consulted us. We want this to stop."

Kistabish said Canadian Malartic recently issued a media release noting the company has met with First Nations near the mine over the last two years and held seven negotiation tables with the communities concerned.

"But those all led to nothing," Kistabish exclaimed. "Do you think we would be outside protesting if those [meetings] had brought concrete results? They've made us offers that are just ridiculous."

Following the protest on November 21, Kistabish met with Quebec Energy and Natural Resources Minister Pierre Moreau.

"I think we were heard and understood," he said. "We asked to meet with Minister Moreau and he accepted. It's encouraging to know that we have his support and he was very receptive towards us."

While Kistabish acknowledged the importance of government involvement in their struggle for rights and recognition, the main focus is still securing impact and benefit agreements with the mining companies on their land.

"For sure we're looking to the government to solve this in the long term,

we already have a consultation and accommodation agreement with the Quebec government," he said. "What we really want is an IBA with the mining companies. We want to be stakeholders in the projects that take place here. But in Abitibi-Témiscamingue there seems to be resistance to this and that's what we're trying to break."

Kistabish noted that Abitibi-Témiscamingue offers huge potential to the mining industry. "There's a diverse selection of minerals: copper, gold, lithium, nickel... Sure, there's some potential mining sites in the urban areas but a lot of the sites are on the territory where we practice our traditional activities."

Kistabish said the Anishnabe would submit their conditions and wait to see how Quebec and the mining companies respond. He assured that his community will do "whatever is necessary" to obtain equitable treatment, including legal battles or more public protests.

"Our traditional land is our history – the passing down of knowledge, the understanding of our history," he said. "It's all a part of these lakes and portage routes. There are burial grounds, important harvesting areas more favourable for caribou hunting. I think you can understand that all of the potential of this land is what has allowed us to live here and to survive up until today. We're very concerned about our territory. We must protect it."



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October 17-18, 2017	Cree Nation of Waswanipi	Community Health & Fitness Centre	17th (2-5pm, 6-9pm) 18th (9am-12pm, 6-9pm)
POSTPONED	Cree Nation of Nemaska	Recreation Hall	TBD
November 14-15, 2017	Cree Nation of Wemindji	Community Hall	7:00 - 10:00
December 12-13, 2017	Waskaganish First Nation	KKL Conference Room	6:30 - 9:30pm
January 16-17, 2018	Cree Nation of Eastmain	*To be confirmed	TBD
February 20-21, 2018	Washaw Sibi	*To be confirmed	TBD
March 20-21, 2018	Cree Nation of Mistissini	*To be confirmed	TBD

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More pain for St. Anne's victims

While the former Conservative government created a compensation fund for victims of abuse at residential schools, MP Charlie Angus says the Trudeau administration continues to block access to evidence in government archives that would support victims' Independent Assessment Process claims.

In a letter to Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould, Angus complained that massive portions of documentation made available to victims at St. Anne's Residential School in Fort Albany, Ontario – one of the most notorious in the country – were completely blacked out, making them unusable in court.

Angus asked Wilson-Raybould why the government is withholding 12,000 pages of witness statements made by the survivors of the school – even though she had personally given Angus the impression that she was willing to fight for them as an Indigenous person. Instead, files remain redacted and now the courts are seeking further proof from survivors of the abuse.

"I am astounded to learn that in IAP claims that have been reopened, your officials have taken the extraordinary step of claiming the very documents your officials were forced to provide are inadmissible unless the claimant can provide a witness," Angus wrote.



CFL in the Red Zone

The Canadian Football League's biggest moment this year involved more than two teams battling for the Grey Cup.

Held in Ottawa, the fans at TD Place Stadium were welcomed by Algonquin Chief Kirby Whiteduck before the kick-off to the game.

"On behalf of the Algonquin Nation I want to welcome you today to Ottawa, the home of the Redblacks and unsundered Algonquin territory," said Whiteduck. "Competitive sports has always been part of Algonquin culture and with that I wish both teams the best of game today."

Whiteduck also mentioned that the Toronto Argonauts hailed from the traditional territories of the Mississauga people while the rival Calgary Stampeders came from the lands of the Blackfoot Confederacy.

The CFL, the Algonquin Nation and the football fans certainly gave Canada a game to remember, as it was the first time the league had acknowledged First Nations in this way. The game was a back-and-forth battle, finally won by the Argos 27-24.



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MoCreebec's acceptance as the 11th Cree community paves way for provincial and federal negotiations

ROAD TO RECOGNITION

by Dan Isaac

A resolution passed at the Grand Council of the Crees/Cree Nation Government (GCC/CNG) council board meeting November 22 seeks to make good on a 40-year-old promise.

"It was recognized during the negotiations of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JNBQA) that there were Eeyou Cree living in Ontario," said Allan Jolly, Chief the MoCreebec Eeyoud. "Our leaders back then recognized us then and promised a time would come where the issue would be resolved."

Adopted unanimously, the resolution officially makes MoCreebec the 11th Cree community of Eeyou Istchee.

The road to recognition as an Eeyou community began in the summer of 2016. "We went to the 10 Cree communities in the past 16 months to tell the people our story," said Jolly. "We told them that the presence of Cree in Ontario goes back a long time, it's not a recent development."

Because of the community's location (the southern end of Moose Factory Island), the Ontario and Canadian governments have viewed them as part of the Treaty 9 peoples. MoCreebec has always maintained this is simply untrue.

According to Jolly, the history of the Eeyou Cree in Ontario likely goes back 200 years, and possibly much longer – a timeframe that predates the founding of Ontario and the northern extension of the Ontario-Quebec border, as well as the signing of Treaty 9.

GCC Executive Director Bill Namagoose explained that the resolution doesn't grant voting rights to MoCreebec but is still an important condition to negotiating the community's unique rights with the governments of Ontario and Canada.

Chief the MoCreebec Eeyoud, Allan Jolly



The next step is to negotiate a complementary agreement to the JNBQA. And Chief Jolly believes the political climate is now right in order to “add substance and clarity to the legal framework needed to establish a MoCreebec community in Ontario.”

Jolly expressed gratitude for the support. “I want to say thank you to each of the 10 Cree communities and GCC who supported and passed resolutions in support of our goal and purpose,” he said. “I was overwhelmed with the reception we got, and we felt there was a lot of reconnection with the people. It’s something I’ll never forget.”

**Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) /
Cree Nation Government – Council Board
Resolution No.: 2017-XX**

WHEREAS the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) and the Cree Nation

THAT the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government shall support the development and self-determination of MoCreebec Eeyoud.



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all.
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Cree Nation of Mistissini

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May this wonderful time of the year touch your heart in a special way!

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From Chief and Council.



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OUR PROGRAM

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The expression *"Believe in yourself"* is dear to our program as we want to send a strong message of empowerment and self-worth to our youth.

OUR SERVICE SITES

Taapwaauchaayimiisu program in Mistissini has officially moved in their new service site at the Family Resource Centre (Old Youth Centre). Thank you, Cree Nation of Mistissini, for your collaboration in providing space for our youth.

We would also like to thank everyone that attended our open houses in Waskaganish and Chisasibi.

Should you require more information, please contact the coordinator.

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Called to action

Ontario says curriculum changes are a **path to reconciliation** with Indigenous Peoples

Photos & Story
by Ben Powless

“As educators,
it’s **essential**
learning we bring
to our students
what our history,
what our country’s
history is – **the
good and bad**,
acknowledging the
harm, but also the
wonderful cultures
that are there”

- Vice Principal Michelle Gauthier





When a group of Ottawa high school students approached Vice-Principal Michelle Gauthier about sleeping overnight in a teepee to raise awareness about water issues in First Nations communities, she thought it was a great idea.

It was a natural evolution for a student group that began introducing Indigenous culture and education at Immaculata High School in Ottawa over the past few years.

Last year, student Chloe Walker had the chance to attend a gathering focused on ethical research in schools. Returning to Immaculata, she and other students wanted to try to bridge the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

medicine wheel, learning about residential schools, and studying Indigenous culture today.

They were able to organize round dances, having Indigenous dancing and drumming in school hallways, and organize a fundraiser for families of missing Indigenous youth from a nearby reserve.

They also turned a school room into a cultural centre. Named the Mamidosewin Room, they were able to dec-

bulletin board focused on the community of Waswanipi.

Ontario announced in November that they'll be changing the curriculum for all students in the province to learn about Indigenous culture and history.

Education Minister Mitzie Hunter and Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Minister David Zimmer made the announcement, which will ensure students learn about residential schools, trea-

You see the importance of reconciliation, learning from all students and cultures. When we learn from each other, and about our historical mistakes, it helps us come together as a country

- Chloe Walker

"You see the importance of reconciliation, learning from all students and cultures. When we learn from each other, and about our historical mistakes, it helps us come together as a country," Walker explained.

They conducted a school-wide survey, which led to them to focus on a number of issues. These included missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, understanding the

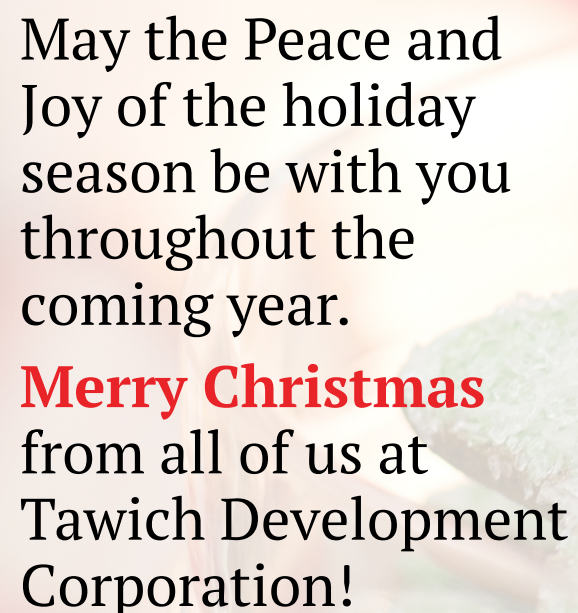
orate the room with art made by Indigenous students and their parents, including a large quilt donated by one student's mother.

This year, students listen to the Canadian anthem in Mi'kmaq, and learn an Algonquin word of the week, have an Indigenous chef come in to teach the students, have numerous guest speakers, and will even have an upcoming

ties, as well as the historical and modern contributions of Indigenous people to Canada.

Ontario says the move was a response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action.

The changes would affect both elementary and high school students, and would take place in both provincially-run schools as well as schools in First Nations communities.



Vice Principal Michelle Gauthier

The government also committed \$2.7 million to helping teachers adapt to the new curriculum, which is to be fully implemented by next fall.

The announcement came as a welcome surprise to the Chiefs of Ontario's Director of Education, Julia Candlish.

She says it's important for First Nations students to see themselves reflected in the education system, and for non-First Nations students to learn about Indigenous history and culture.

"What children have learned so far throughout the curriculum is pre-contact or early contact and they don't really understand what the reality is for Indigenous Peoples, and what their contributions have been to the way Canada formed," Candlish said.

She sees this as a meaningful path towards reconciliation.

"The hope is First Nations people and non-First Nations people will have a better understanding of one another, and be able to live in a way that upholds the treaty commitments."

She also expects the Ontario government to work more closely with First Nations on developing and implementing the changes. While the province stated in a press release that they had worked with Indigenous partners, Candlish said that the Chiefs of Ontario were not consulted.

Back at Immaculata, Vice-Principal Gauthier says students have embraced the changes, and have been touched by learning of the difficulties many Indigenous people faced in residential schools.

She says that even though many of the changes to focus on Indigenous culture came from students, the path to reconciliation requires that the education system embrace that same focus.

"We have to have an understanding of our history," Gauthier insisted. "As educators, it's essential learning we bring to our students what our history, what our country's history is – the good and bad, acknowledging the harm, but also the wonderful cultures that are there."

Merry Christmas



On behalf of the MoCreebec Eeyoud we would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Prosperous New Year.

Christmas has arrived early for the MoCreebec Eeyoud on November 22, 2017, as we have gained recognition as the 11th Cree Community within the Cree Nation of Eeyou - Eenou Istchee.

Thank you all for your support!

From the MoCreebec Eeyoud Chief & Council & Staff.

Loving Lobbut

Robert Ottereyes is fondly remembered across Eeyou Istchee

by Nick Wapachee

Robert L. Ottereyes, known to many as Lobbut, passed away at Montreal's Royal Victoria Hospital November 17 at around 2 am. He was a member of the Cree Nation of Waswanipi, where he was laid to rest November 22.

In mid-October, Ottereyes was medevaced to Montreal for respiratory complications and was in the intensive care unit at the Glen Site.

The son of Juliette Trapper and Billy Ottereyes, he grew up with 14 siblings. As an adult, he had three children of his own – Joshua Mathias, Juliette Ottereyes and Julianna Ottereyes.

Juliette, 29, married to Eric Bearskin, remembers her father as a traveler and a great host to his friends and family at his home. "He loved to share his food with others," she said. "He thought that food brought people together."

A number of friends and business partners from different companies attended his funeral. "He knew a lot of people, but I didn't know the scale until they all came," said Juliette. "He was kind, generous and very humble – I don't know how many times I've been told that."

Lobbut was a true outdoorsman and loved going to his cabin near Kilometre 130 on the James Bay Highway, between Matagami and Waskaganish. He could often be found on the links during the summer months, at golf benefits with friends, meeting new people. He was known to schedule his summers around the sport he enjoyed so much.

As a financial consultant and advisor, Ottereyes was passionate about helping derive benefits from the mining industry for First Nation peoples, and was a member with Secretariat to the Cree Nation Abitibi-Témiscamingue Economic Alliance in 2002. Before his passing, Ottereyes was working with the Conseil des Atikamekw de Wemotaci as Director of Finance.

"He was a man of numbers, always was," Juliette observed.

He studied at Cégep André-Laurendeau and Concordia University in Montreal, where he majored in administration and financial management. He administered project developments and was part of the management team at the business-consulting firm, efficiency.ca, for over 12 years.

Ottereyes was also a supporter of former Waswanipi chief Paul Gull, and helped MP Romeo Saganash during his two federal election campaigns.

George Oblin, who is married to Ottereyes' sister Caroline Diamond, remembers Lobbut as being a strong kid in 1974.

Oblin was 25 at the time, and the 13-year-old Lobbut was carrying a motor on his shoulders, while trekking to their cabin by the highway. "I thought, 'Oh my goodness, I wouldn't be able to do that,'" Oblin said.

Lobbut was a man who always had a smile on his face, and was eager to help others and enjoyed people's company, Oblin reminisced. "He would make people laugh. He had a presence. When he walked into the room, you knew he was there."

The day after the funeral, the family gathered to remember Lobbut and shared stories about his life.



Oblin was asked to sing Lobbut's favourite songs – Conway Twitty's It's Only Make Believe and Elvis Presley's Are You Lonesome Tonight?

"I sang in remembrance of Lobbut," he said. "It was just my way of honouring him."

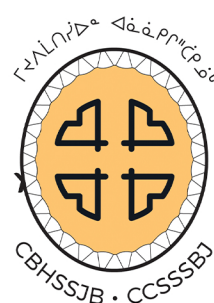
Oblin remembers watching Lobbut singing karaoke and making people laugh with his performances. "He might not have been much of a singer, but he was an entertainer," Oblin said.

Friends for many years, Oblin remembers a trip they took to Val-d'Or. As they drove along 3rd Avenue, Lobbut kept pointing out people on the street and telling Oblin, "That's so and so."

"He seemed to know everybody and everybody knew him," Oblin said.

The viewing took place November 21 in Chibougamau during the day and at the Waswanipi Anglican Church in the evening.

On the back of his eulogy-card his family wrote: "Good food, good friends, good times."



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*Wishing everyone in
Eeyou Istchee a safe and
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Montreal voters finally elect an Indigenous person on city council

Marie-Josée Parent only moved to Montreal as an adult, but quickly fell in love with the city. A few years later, she made history as the first Indigenous person elected as a city councilor since Montreal was incorporated as a city in 1832.

At one point she moved to Paris while her mother worked on her PhD, but her mom sent her back to Canada, worrying that she was “becoming too French.”

Recently defeated Mayor Denis Coderre had encouraged Parent to run for his political party to add an Indigenous voice to municipal politics. She accepted and won a close decision, defeating her opponent by less than 700

Still, Parent acknowledges there's a lot of important work to be done in the city on Indigenous issues. Before even being elected to city council, she spent three years working with the city on their reconciliation strategy, which was inspired in many ways by Vancouver.

"Do it! Get involved," she implored. "Every government is a place where we can have a voice. The more we participate, the more power we have to bring about change. The important thing is to stay connected to the land and community and values."

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commerce&industry@cngov.ca
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Cable connection

Chisasibi opts to continue with local provider as
ECN goes forward with fibre-optic expansion

by Joshua Grant | Photo provided by ECN



According to the Eeyou Communications Network (ECN), everything is going according to plan with the company's major telecommunications project that will see the James Bay region hooked up to a fibre-optic internet, video and IP telephone network.

As work progresses in other Cree communities, however, the Chisasibi band council has declined ECN's service proposal and will continue with local provider Kinwapt Cable Inc.

Chisasibi Chief Davey Bobbish told *the Nation* that, in the spring of 2017, Kinwapt Cable Inc. asked the band council for an opportunity to provide similar services to those offered by ECN. "Council agreed and gave five months to Kinwapt Cable to table its plan by the September council meeting," Bobbish said.

Their presentation listed the history and progress of the company after being in business and serving the community for 24 years. It mentioned the meaningful employment it provides to local

people, and to upgrade infrastructure to meet the needs of the community.

ECN president Alfred Loon told *the Nation* that while it's unfortunate that Chisasibi residents will not have access to fibre-optic internet, ECN will continue to work with Chisasibi and provide some of the infrastructure necessary to maintain the telecommunications network in that community. That being said, ECN employees work with a completely different system than Kinwapt and will not be able to help with repairs or maintenance to Kinwapt's coaxial cable network.

ECN Director General Cedric Melançon said that cable is not necessarily slower than fibre-optic technology but that Kinwapt must maintain quality service.

"There are pretty good speeds achievable with cable but it's up to them to continue evolving their network so

"Everything is on track to provide the service as planned in the spring."

-ECN Director General Cedric Melançon

they can support the same kind of standards," he said. "It is possible to provide good service, but the thing is we know that fibre is going to be able to provide a good service for another 20-30 years, whereas with cable this is uncertain."

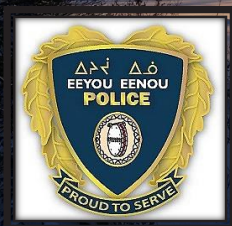
As for ECN, Melançon said the company will meet its contractual obligation with the federal government to have all of the Cree communities as well as some neighbouring municipalities connected to a fibre-optic network by March 31, 2018. The main transport hubs that will connect individual homes in each community to the fibre-optic network have already been constructed.

"We recently established a fibre-optic ring around the region that has helped stabilize the system," Melançon said. "Everything is on track to provide the service as planned in the spring."

Wishing everyone a safe and happy holiday season. We would also like to remind people not to drive while impaired and also not to drive distracted.

Your life is too precious!

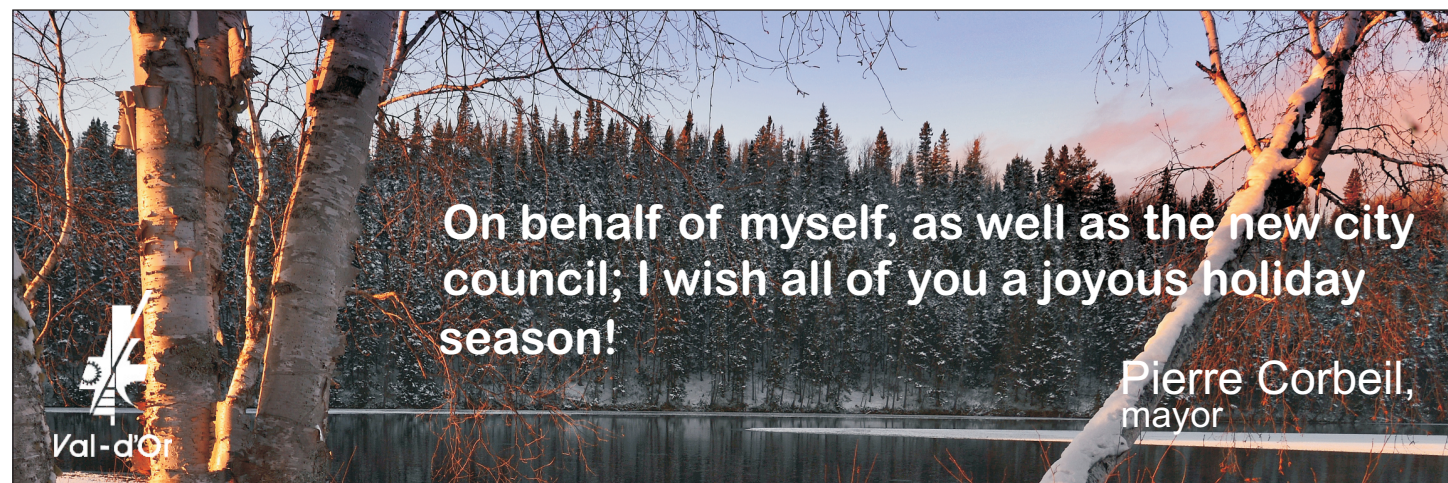
Eeyou Eenou Police.

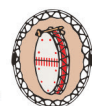


SEASONS GREETINGS

On behalf of myself, as well as the new city council; I wish all of you a joyous holiday season!

Pierre Corbeil,
mayor





The wave of **the future**

by Xavier Kataquapit



I am a fan of technology. From the time I received my first computer, there was no looking back. It is funny to think now that my little android smartphone can do so much more than that old 386 PC could achieve. Technology is moving ahead in exponential fashion.

A few decades ago in Attawapiskat we had no running water or indoor toilets for most members of the community. Much of our housing was run-down. Education beyond secondary school was rare. Many still hunted and gathered on the land, but most families ate a lot of canned meats like Klik, hot dogs, burgers, fries and washed it down with soda pop. There was a reality of hopelessness in First Nations across Canada during this period and we were caught in a web of alcohol and drug addictions.

As I write this column, I find it strange to admit that although things are better, they still need to improve. Many remote First Nations still do not have decent housing or clean dependable water systems. We still don't have full-time doctors or dentists. Diabetes – mainly due to poor diet – is epidemic and young people are spending too much time on their smartphones, laptops and PCs resulting in health problems.

However, it's not all doom and gloom. I see my nephews and nieces working in good jobs and accessing post-secondary education in developing careers. They are supporting their families and moving into their own homes all over northern Ontario. Some of the good things that are happening have to do with resource companies realizing that it is necessary to work with First Nations in developing mines, hydro projects and other resource developments. That is a huge change in only 20 years or so.

Besides all of these changes, we have the unbelievable speed in the development of technology. Everybody I know has a smartphone and many also have laptops, tablets and PCs. The world has never been so connected yet somehow everyone seems to be more alone. We spend most of our time talking to people in an online world that seems distant and artificial. We have access to more news so should be all aware of the right-wing fascism that is raising its ugly head once again in Europe, the US and right here in Canada.

I find it hard to believe we have right-wing militia type groups in this country. Even though we know that our democracies and the freedoms we cherish are being attacked, most of

I find it strange to admit that although things are better, **they still need to improve.**

us don't care. We have access to this knowledge but we are not motivated to become involved politically. No matter what technologies we have developed we are still living in a world where 1% of the world population now owns half of the world's wealth. We have enough resources, technology and intelligence to make the world more fair and equitable, but that won't be happening anytime in the near future.

My GPS will tell me how to get from one place to the other, my smartphone will wake me up, plan my calendar and answer any question I have. Every minute of the day my Facebook friends tell me what they are up to, what they had for lunch, what time they woke up, and what time they went to bed. I can play games on any of my devices that encourage me to slaughter tons of people in military scenarios or I can get lost in games where I live as someone else in another reality. It is all a little overwhelming, but I guess at the very least it is a good thing I realize it.



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